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June 15, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced today that House Appropriators had agreed with his request to reduce Louisiana's state/local cost share for Hurricane Ike recovery projects. This development follows Congressman Melancon's [request last week](#)

to House Appropriations Chairman David Obey that Congress reduce Louisiana's cost share for recovery projects from Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, as Congress had previously done for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

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Today, Congressman Melancon received word that House leadership had heeded his request and included the Louisiana cost share reduction for Hurricane Ike projects in the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2009 (H.R. 2346). The House of Representatives will be voting on the legislation on Tuesday.

"The people of Louisiana have endured four devastating storms in just three years, stretching our patience and our budgets to the breaking point," said Rep. Melancon. "This bill will significantly reduce our local cost share for Hurricane Ike recovery projects, freeing up tens of millions of much-needed dollars that can be used by our state for other priorities. In short, this provision will be tremendously helpful to our efforts in Louisiana to fully and quickly rebuild from the 2008 storms. I am grateful to House leadership for supporting it."

Under current law, the state of Louisiana and the local project sponsors are required to pay 25% of the cost for emergency protective measures and rebuilding projects, and 10% for debris removal projects resulting from the two 2008 hurricanes. Meeting this local match requirement has been an enormous burden on both the state and local governments, as the storms have dramatically reduced their revenue. Officials have struggled to fund both recovery costs and day-to-day expenses.

The cost share provision included in the Supplemental bill would completely waive the state/local cost share for Hurricane Ike emergency protective measures and debris removal

projects, making them 100% federally funded. The bill would also reduce the state/local cost share from 25% to 10% for Hurricane Ike repair and rebuilding projects, making them 90% federally funded.

Upon receiving word that these changes would be included in the Supplemental, Congressman Melancon [sent a letter](#) to the six other Louisiana Congressmen urging them to support the bill tomorrow.

In his letter, Congressman Melancon wrote, **"Although I would have liked adjustments for both Hurricanes Ike and Gustav included in this legislation, these changes will benefit 27 parishes across the State (Acadia, Allen, Beauregard, Bienville, Calcasieu, Cameron, Concordia, DeSoto, Iberia, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafourche, Livingston, Natchitoches, Plaquemines, Red River, Sabine, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Terrebonne, Union, Vermillion, Vernon)."**

Congressman Melancon continued, **"The Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness estimates that these changes will save the State \$25 million, which helps all parishes still rebuilding from Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Gustav. As you consider your vote on H.R. 2346, I ask that you most remember how important this measure is to our troops and to the rebuilding of our State after Hurricane Ike. I also urge you to support this bill."**

Congressman Melancon has been working to reduce the local cost share for Gustav and Ike recovery projects since last September, when he [sent a letter](#) to President Bush asking him to waive Louisiana's local match requirement. While President Bush waived the cost share for Texas last fall, he did not waive Louisiana's match.

[Click here](#)

to view Rep. Melancon's September 2008 letter.

Over the past four years, Congressman Melancon has worked in Congress to reduce the financial burden on citizens and local governments in south Louisiana following major hurricanes. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, he worked to convince Congressional leadership to waive 100% of the local cost share requirement for disaster recovery projects in Louisiana.

At the request of Congressman Melancon and the entire Louisiana delegation, the cost share waiver was included in the 2007 Iraq/Katrina Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President at the end of May 2007. Before the local cost share was waved, many of the estimated 23,000 disaster recovery projects in Louisiana had been put on hold because local governments did not have the resources to provide the match.

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